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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8580
INFO RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS IMMEDIATE 0008
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL IMMEDIATE 5288
RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU//TCH// IMMEDIATE
RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU IMMEDIATE
RUEHAK/USDAO ANKARA TU IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 000126

SIPDIS

EUR/SE, EUR/PRA, NEA/IR, ISN/CPI

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/26/2019

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SUBJECT: TURKEY TO SEND BACK VENEZUELA-BOUND IRANIAN
SHIPMENT

REF: ANKARA 3

Classified By: Pol-Mil Counselor Anthony Godfrey, Reasons 1.4 (b,d)

¶1. (C) MFA Nonproliferation and Disarmament DDG Ahmet Muhtar Gun confirmed for Pol-Mil Couns on January 26 that the GOT has decided to turn back the Iranian shipment bound for Venezuela (reftel). According to Gun, detailed investigations into the contents of the shipment concluded that the shipment's declaration was "incomplete." In particular, Gun noted that a number of chemical substances contained in the shipment were not listed in the declaration. According to Gun, the GOT expressed to Iran its "strong discontent" over the declaration's incompleteness and has asked the Iranians to take back the shipment. The GOT made a point to have the shipment returned through the land border with Iran (not via ship) under close monitoring to ensure that the shipment goes back to Iran and nowhere else.

¶2. (C) Comment: Although the Turkish authorities decided not to seize the shipment, this is a positive outcome. Despite its sensitive relationship with Iran, the GOT demonstrated that it is paying close attention to shipments from Iran and took a forward-leaning position to prevent the shipment from taking place even though there were no clear requirement for them to do so. Also positive was Turkey's decision to confront Iran over such shipments.

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Jeffrey